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**United States Army Special Forces:  
Versatile Element in the Future  
Security Environment**

**A Monograph  
by**

**Lieutenant Colonel Hayward S. Florer, Jr.  
Special Forces**



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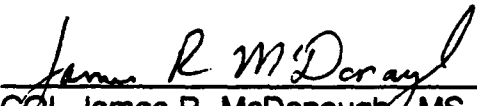
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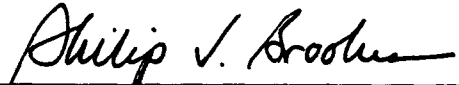
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## ABSTRACT

UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL FORCES: VERSATILE ELEMENT IN THE FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT by LTC Hayward S. Florer, Jr., USA, 57 pages.

This monograph examines the utility of U.S. Army Special Forces in the changing world security environment. It first analyzes the security environment by looking at several theories and assessments. Then it focuses on the post-Cold War national military strategy of the United States. From this analysis the monograph develops evaluation criteria against which the study judges how useful Special Forces will be for campaign planners at the Unified Commands around the globe.

The monograph uses the criteria as evaluation tools to judge the performance of Special Forces in four case studies of recent operations that represent four different situations and models for the future. The four case studies include: Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Provide Comfort, the professionalization of the El Salvadoran Armed Forces, and Silver Anvil. The study does not describe each operation in detail but gleans the essential operational features in order to evaluate them in light of the evaluation criteria.

The monograph can be valuable in the current debate over roles and missions because it shows how Special Forces are actually used by the Unified Commanders and in what ways they are operationally effective in today's complex security environment. The conclusions show Special Forces' versatility as they successfully accomplished a wide range of missions in dramatically different situations.



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## INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Cold War the United States finds itself in the position as the only superpower on earth.<sup>1</sup> Strong economic competition comes from Japan and Europe, but in terms of a combination of the elements of national power -- military, economic, political, and informational -- the United States clearly has no equal now or in the immediate future.<sup>2</sup> The Clinton administration must decide how to use the power of this unique position. As it decides on what strategy to adopt, it faces serious questions about how the military element of national power should be structured. This monograph deals with a small but uniquely qualified unit, the U.S. Army Special Forces, and how it may fit into the military strategy of the future.

Military power will continue to be a critically important element even as the administration develops new directions in the national strategy. Determining the roles and missions of the military services and the structure needed in each service becomes essential. The Navy recently produced a White Paper to show what part it will play in the future.<sup>3</sup> The Army is completing a rewrite of its doctrine for operations in FM 100-5, Operations, indicating its recognition that the world has changed.<sup>4</sup> The leadership of Special Operations Forces (SOF) has also produced several articles and speeches which extol the abilities of all the various elements found under the SOF umbrella--Navy, Air Force and several different Army units.<sup>5</sup> Over the last two years while the implications of the end of the Cold War were unfolding, two extensive studies of SOF utility were written, one by Colonel William J. Flavin, while he was on a fellowship for the U.S. Army War College, and the other by Major Robert B. Adolph, written for his masters

degree thesis at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.<sup>6</sup> Both of these studies probed the full spectrum of joint capabilities and in Colonel Flavin's case at the historical roots and use of SOF by the United States. However, neither of these publications looked specifically at Special Forces which has the largest structure and the most diverse number of missions in the Army's SOF. There is a need for a critical analysis of the utility of the Army's Special Forces in light of the current international security environment and in light of Special Forces' most recent operations. This study intends to fill that void.

In order to ascertain if Special Forces will have utility in the future, this monograph will first examine the changing world security environment by looking at some current theories and assessments. Then, it will focus on the post-Cold War national military strategy of the United States. From this analysis the paper will develop evaluation criteria against which the study will judge how useful Special Forces will be for military decision makers at the Joint Chiefs of Staff or for campaign planners at the Unified Commands around the globe. These criteria will represent the essential operational features that Special Forces will require in order to play a part in the national security strategy which is designed to deal with an evolving but recognizable national security environment.

The criteria will be used as evaluation tools to judge the performance of Special Forces in four case studies of recent operations. This emphasis on recent operations also sets this study apart from the previously mentioned works and gives it more immediate value in today's debate about roles and missions and what structure the Army needs in order to accomplish them. This monograph will analyze these particular operations



also because they represent four very different situations and models for the future.

The study will focus on the integration of Special Forces in conventional operations and in coalition warfare during Desert Shield/Storm, August 1990-March 1991; the coordination of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private Organizations (PVOs), coalition operations, joint operations, special reconnaissance, as well as organization of displaced civilians (DC) during the humanitarian assistance operation, Provide Comfort, April 1991-June 1991; the long term and continuing commitment to the professionalization of the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF), 1983-1993; and, finally, the crisis response, Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO), Silver Anvil, in Sierra Leone, May 1992. The paper will not attempt to describe each of these operations in detail; rather, it will glean the essential operational features in order to evaluate them in light of the evaluation criteria. Any classified operations that occurred as part of these events will not be analyzed and will not alter the validity of the conclusions; the unclassified deeds of these men should demonstrate clearly enough their value and can be explored without the restrictions of military secrecy.

The genesis of this paper is the need to look beyond the roles and missions as found in the field manuals and see how the Unified Commanders actually use Special Forces. By applying a set of evaluation criteria that reflect operational needs in the future against their actual use, this study's conclusions will be relevant and timely.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The shape of the international security environment drives the formulation of the national security strategy and the resultant national military strategy. Several theorists have written about the new post-Cold War environment which forms the underpinnings of the national strategies. The primary features of that environment include the proliferation of liberal democracies and the enduring peaceful relations among them. Another feature is the proliferation of ethno-nationalistic conflicts that had been frozen during the Cold War. This situation has caused the increased frequency of conflict in the underdeveloped and undeveloped world. This study will analyze these features and the theories behind them before moving to the national strategies.

The most striking feature of post-World War II history has been the absence of war between the major powers.<sup>7</sup> Nuclear deterrence between the superpowers created an atmosphere in which any conflict could possibly spin out of control and entangle them; therefore, they both applied great care before involvement in Third World conflicts and took every effort to prevent conflict in Europe.<sup>8</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, a Cold War historian, points out that war between the major powers during the Cold War became obsolete and the management of crises by them kept a relative "long peace" in the world.<sup>9</sup>

Francis Fukuyama, writing at the Rand Corporation, develops a theory, to which Gaddis refers, that Western liberal democracy is the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy [is] the final form of human government."<sup>10</sup> Fukuyama says that the Soviet Union dissolved because it could no longer compete

with the power of the "idea" of Western liberalism and that the triumph of this idea would greatly reduce the likelihood of large-scale conflict between states.<sup>11</sup>

John Spanier, a political scientist from the University of Florida, adds weight to the argument that war between democracies is obsolete "because their leaders believe that in foreign policy too they ought to be able to settle conflicts with other democracies by means of compromise."<sup>12</sup> These men clearly articulate that a major feature of the post-cold war world will be that the spread of democracy will also spread peaceful resolution to conflict. This then becomes the first cornerstone of U.S. security policy, namely, the encouragement of democracy around the world.

The next feature to be examined is the resolution of conflict between the developed and undeveloped world. Professor Spanier examines this issue in the eighth edition of Games Nations Play.<sup>13</sup> He finds that great power intervention in the Third World is very constrained, first by the growing military capabilities and technologies that the Third World can acquire, citing the Exocet, Silkworm, SAM and SCUD missiles that are routinely found there.<sup>14</sup> Intervention is also constrained by the guilt and moral repugnance aroused in democratic societies when a "Western nation with a predominately white population and a colonial past attempts to coerce one of the non-Western, largely nonwhite former colonies."<sup>15</sup> This moral constraint to intervention is amplified by the public scrutiny of every aspect of war by today's media. Every facet of the hostilities is revealed no matter how embarrassing or politically damaging it may be to the government. The power of the media and public opinion influenced the Soviets in their decision to leave Afghanistan because they could not suppress politically

and militarily embarrassing events. Spanier concludes that great powers-- democratic or not--tend to lose protracted, small wars more often than not, because the smaller nations learn to wear them out and win the war on the great power's home front. "The key to the intervening power's ability to stay the course in a protracted conflict is preserving public support."<sup>16</sup> This public support will become more and more difficult to preserve as public opinion in the Western democracies, and since 1989 in the former Soviet Union, concludes that war for coercive purposes is illegitimate. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, the end of Russian support for wars in Angola, Afghanistan, and Cambodia and the selectively defined vital interests and interventions by the United States after Vietnam illustrate this point.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, wars between great powers and Third World states will occur less; unfortunately, the opposite trend dominates in conflicts between Third World states.

Conflict in the underdeveloped and undeveloped world echoes loudly in all of the analyses of the international security situation. Francis Fukuyama identifies this as normal for states still in history, that is, still in the grips of "nationalism and other forms of racial and ethnic consciousness."<sup>18</sup> He says that much of the tension can be explained by peoples who are forced to live in unrepresentative political systems that they have not chosen.<sup>19</sup> He concludes that "terrorism and wars of national liberation will continue to be an important item on the international agenda."<sup>20</sup>

Professor John Gaddis expands on this theme by saying that democracy itself may be the "revolutionary" force in the Third World as authoritarian regimes resist the demand by their populations for representation in the government and accountability from their leaders. He

recognizes the fragile nature of many newly constituted democracies and the possibility that authoritarian forces might try to regain control as economic conditions worsen and old elites jockey for power.<sup>21</sup> In any case, war and conflict will be more prevalent primarily because national groups search for degrees of self-determination or independence.

John Spanier develops his own analysis on war between Third World states. He finds that national self-determination is interpreted in the developing world as the legitimizing principle on which Third World states claimed independence from colonial powers. Yet, they lay claim to territory of neighboring states on the basis of ethnic identification, giving them the right to intervene in their neighbor's internal affairs either to reclaim terrain or to protect the rights and/or lives of their ethnic brothers. For these states conventional force has gained great utility. "War", as Spanier says, "has essentially become the tool of Third World states."<sup>22</sup>

In summary, future conflict between democracies will not occur; wars between the developed world and the under or undeveloped world will occur less frequently than before in history; and wars between Third World states will be common as they deal with national and ethnic forces seeking self-determination and because they can easily acquire weapons to carry out their designs.

Several implications for U.S. strategy become apparent. Democracy is the most peaceful form of government and the U.S. should encourage its growth at every opportunity. Future successful interventions by the U.S. in the underdeveloped or undeveloped world will have to be relatively brief, have the support of public opinion, be fairly painless in lives and treasure, and meet clearly stated objectives. Finally, the U.S. will have to recognize

the reality of widespread conflict in the developing world and carefully choose where to intervene. These are the implications from an analysis of future conflict. Let us turn now to other implications of the international security environment that may affect U.S. strategy formulation.

John Spanier describes the contemporary post-cold war state system as "unipolycentric" wherein the U.S. remains the only superpower, but also where power has been widely diffused in the international system. The rapid changes in international politics continue to erode the historical structure of dominance based on military power.<sup>23</sup> Japan and the European Community grow in economic power, sharing world dominance with the U.S. which in turn lessens the importance of the United States' military power.<sup>24</sup> Other international political structures have grown in importance as well, the United Nations being the most notable example. In the United States the economic, diplomatic, and informational elements of power become as important as the military element, thus requiring closer coordination among all U.S. governmental agencies. The diffusion of power also means that the U.S. can act effectively only in concert with other nations in new alliances, coalitions and international organizations.

The diffusion of power described above also implies a much more interrelated world economy. Economic instability goes hand-in-hand with political instability as major threats to world security. Nations in conflict will not produce economic growth, causing a downward spiral of yet more instability. Some analysts find that the roots of instability go beyond ethnic conflict and include social inequalities, religious fundamentalism, population migration, skyrocketing population growth, famine, war, organized crime, devastating natural disasters, and poverty.<sup>25</sup> Any one of these factors could

result in instability, but a combination of them limits economic growth and stops the ability of democratic forces to bring about peaceful change. Instability can also be caused by unresponsive, incompetent, or self-enriching government institutions that fail to develop a country's human potential or that allow uncontrolled economic development or that choke off economic development by over-centralization.<sup>26</sup>

All of these features of the international security environment have implications for the U.S. national security and military strategies. The diffusion of the United States' power means that American actions will be typically in concert with coalitions, and that the U.S. will act through the United Nations by putting teeth into the collective decisions of that institution. It also means that resort to military power in these coalitions and in the U.N. will not be the first option. Other international organizations will get new emphasis from the U.S. to get them involved in conflict resolution or the promotion of stability. Good examples are the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Another consequence of these changes is the need for the U.S. to use the resources of interagency cooperation and coordination in its strategy. The military element of power may be the most organized and responsive, but it will not be the most appropriate in the situations analyzed above. A Desert Storm situation, where all other elements of power failed to move the Iraqis out of Kuwait, is a classic example of the military solution used as a last resort and then only under United Nations charter and in concert with a host of coalition partners. But Desert Storm could prove to be an exception in the future. The more common future situation will be defined

by crisis situations requiring coordinated diplomatic, economic, interagency responses from the United States and a fully resourced response from the United Nations as well as supporting efforts from other regional organizations.

## NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIES

From these analyses of the security environment it is easy to see why the national security and military strategies take on a totally new shape after the success of the Cold War. The current and emerging strategies are based not on global war but on major and lesser contingencies; they focus on promoting U.S. interests rather than on any immediate threat to our national existence. The intent is to "prevent the gradual erosion of U.S. security in an increasingly disorderly and complex world. To protect and promote our interests, the United States must engage selectively and adroitly in the tasks of shaping its security environment."<sup>27</sup> Global leadership was the essence of President Bush's security strategy, which President Clinton has stated he will continue at least in the near term. It is opportunity-driven as opposed to the threat-driven strategy of containment during the Cold War.<sup>28</sup> President Bush stated clearly that "we will face new challenges that take us beyond containment to a key role in helping forge a democratic peace."<sup>29</sup>

In order to forge a democratic peace and shape its security environment, the United States' strategy must focus on its objective of creating a "peaceful world in which democracies, at least pluralistic governments, and market economies flourish."<sup>30</sup> Since we have seen that



threats opposing U.S. objectives are increasingly non-traditional in a military sense, it is easy to understand that regional instabilities will increasingly affect our nation's security.

The military strategy of the United States rests on four foundations which recognize that international instability is an important threat to U.S. national security. The National Military Strategy of the United States says that "... the real threat we now face is the threat of the unknown, the uncertain. The threat is instability and being unprepared to handle a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected."<sup>31</sup> It clearly states that the U.S. military must be capable of influencing global events to successfully promote the stability required for world-wide progress and prosperity.<sup>32</sup>

The first foundation is strategic deterrence and defense. Since the former Soviet Union still has most of its nuclear hardware, even though it is much less capable of threatening the United States, the U.S. nuclear forces must retain their deterrent value. Several advanced technology programs will keep this critical foundation viable well into the future. Air Force and Navy aircraft, missiles and ships as well as many civilian technology contractors provide the resources to carry out the requirements of this foundation.

Forward presence is the second foundation and is very germane to this study since Special Forces deploy regularly to all parts of the globe on many varied missions. This foundation does not imply that U.S. forces need to be permanently stationed around the world, but that there needs to be a continual presence to "show our commitment, lend credibility to our alliances, enhance regional stability, and provide a crisis-response capability while promoting US influence and access."<sup>33</sup> Even as American

bases close in Europe and the Philippines, this foundation commits the U.S. military to deploy regularly from bases in the continental United States. The implications from this foundation will form an important part of the evaluation criteria to be created in the next section.

Crisis response makes up the third foundation. It too has great relevance to this study because of Special Forces' doctrinal usefulness during any crisis across the operational continuum. The foundation requires the U.S. military to respond very quickly to regional contingencies, prepared to fight unilaterally or as part of a coalition. The crisis may require a single, surgical strike or it may require a full coalition, conventional operation.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the level of conflict, flexible, deployable and versatile units are needed to participate in crisis response.<sup>35</sup> This paper will use the implications of this foundation to develop the criteria of evaluation in the next section.

The last foundation is reconstitution. The ability to create units and activate our industrial base acts as a strategic deterrent to any large, potential, as yet unforeseen enemy. The United States has had to mobilize twice for World Wars and for the Korean conflict in this century without many resources before the conflict to prepare the force or convert the industrial base for wartime production. This element of the national strategy is the farthest thinking and determines planning requirements for the future. However, it is not central to this study. Mass mobilization and reconstitution imply the need for large formations with the right equipment to fight a large threat. Special Forces take too long to train properly to be mass produced and they are not line infantry units designed for conventional missions.<sup>36</sup> Reconstitution can imply that some forces have been deactivated and,

therefore, have to be rebuilt. So far in the current drawdown, the national leadership has not deactivated any Special Forces units; in fact, the leadership has increased Special Forces' structure, activating a battalion 1 October 1992.<sup>37</sup> Reconstitution, however, is not particularly relevant to developing the evaluation criteria for this study.

The national military strategy offers two relevant foundations in which Special Forces potentially play a large role. These two foundations, forward presence and crisis response, broadly outline what kind of operations the military will face in the future and will be used to develop evaluation criteria in the next section to determine if Special Forces will be useful in the future security environment and in the strategy that the United States has created to deal with it.

## THE EVALUATION CRITERIA OF THE CASE STUDIES

The evidence thus far indicates that several operational capabilities will be critical in the future. This paper will select them based on their importance to the strategy and the security environment just described. The study does not examine the doctrine for Special Forces even though it gives an explanation of missions and capabilities in the case studies. Instead, the study looks at the reality of the security environment as some theorists describe it; then, it examines the national strategy to determine evaluation criteria of the usefulness of Special Forces to the "War-fighting CINCs" or Unified Commanders. By using four case studies of the actual employment of Special Forces the paper examines how the Unified Commanders have deployed Special Forces on the ground rather than simply quoting doctrinal

capabilities. The integrity of the conclusions will be preserved in this way. In addition, this paper will not simply look for a yes or no answer to the usefulness question but will indicate the degree of decisiveness that Special Forces played in the situation by rating their success in each evaluation criterion.

The first criterion comes from the analysis of conflict which found that democracies do not fight each other and from the national strategy that places the encouragement of democracy and stability as primary national objectives. Criterion #1: Special Forces must be a force for promoting democracy and stability.

The second criterion derives from the fact that U.S. forward presence will help to prevent conflict by having contacts on the ground if intervention is necessary. Criterion #2: Special Forces soldiers must be prepared to live and work with indigenous peoples, understand a culture's strengths and weaknesses, speak the native language and remain thoroughly professional US soldiers.

An implication of the diffusion of power in the security environment requires the United States to exercise all its elements of power within a coalition. In the commencement address at the U.S. Naval Academy in May 1992, President Bush said,

Where in the past we've relied almost entirely on established formal alliances, the future may require us to turn more often to coalitions built to respond to the needs of the moment . . . Where in the past, many times the heaviest burdens of leadership fell to our nation, we will now see more efforts to seek consensus and concerted action.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, the next criterion concerns the importance of coalitions.

Criterion # 3: Special Forces must operationally integrate with and

contribute to the efficiency of a coalition in which the United States is a partner.

Linked to coalition operations are operations coordinated closely with and under the charter of the United Nations. These operations require much greater care than the traditional exercises under NATO. Here U.S. military members must operate with much negotiating, mentoring, and mature leadership because the U.N. field staff is often inexperienced and under-resourced.<sup>39</sup> These same principles apply when dealing with other Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) and Private Organizations (PVO). Nevertheless, President Bush gave his full support to U.N. actions by saying, "where in the past, international organizations like the United Nations had been paralyzed by Cold War conflict, we will see a future where they can now be a force for peace."<sup>40</sup> Criterion # 4: Special Forces must cooperate with and enhance the operations of the United Nations and other NGO and PVO.

General Colin Powell articulated the next criterion in a speech to the Air Force Association in September 1992 when he said, "... the bottom line is that the ability to operate jointly has become the new hallmark of the American military."<sup>41</sup> Reduced budgets and tailored deployment task forces will demand joint operations in the future. Criterion # 5: Special Forces must operate routinely and at maximum efficiency in a joint force.

Operations around the globe within the implications of forward presence and in light of the importance of political factors over military ones require that the military work in an interagency team.<sup>42</sup> As the security environment analysis indicates, political factors will dominate and as General John R. Galvin, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe,

indicated in a 1 June 1992 speech, "... we must guard against the belief that a military solution can succeed where a political solution has failed. Political action should lead and military action follow only if it is essential."<sup>43</sup> The ambassador's country team is an established interagency group where military attaches and advisory groups are assigned. The U.S. military's nation assistance programs and other military operations will be fully integrated in this group. Therefore, criterion six concerns interagency cooperation and the importance of politics overshadowing military considerations. Criterion # 6: Special Forces must cooperate with and work efficiently in an interagency team where political factors are often more important than military ones.

Criterion seven gives fuller credence to the importance of politics over military factors. In crisis response and forward presence U.S. forces will work in situations where the local foreign military is the government or it dominates the decisions of the weak civilian institutions. The U.S. military may be the only group respected by the civilian population, which places U.S. forces in a unique position to influence events in developing countries. This criterion reflects the future importance of ethno-nationalistic conflict as well because of the extremely complex origin of regional political problems and the need for soldiers to act accordingly. In order to carry out effectively U.S. policy, any military effort must operate in a complex political environment down to the individual soldier level. Thus, criterion #7: Special Forces must operate effectively and appropriately in situations where the individual soldier must deal with political situations that require correct political judgments more often than military decisions.

The study will use these seven evaluation criteria to analyze the

following four case studies in order to determine Special Forces' utility in the future. They also provide a tool to indicate to what degree Special Forces have been successful or where their operations could have been more appropriate.

### **CASE STUDY ONE: DESERT SHIELD/STORM**

After Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army conquered Kuwait in August of 1990 the United Nations turned to the United States to lead a coalition of nations to eject the Iraqi army and restore Kuwait's leaders to power as well as to keep the Iraqis from seizing the oil fields of Saudi Arabia and possibly the United Arab Emirates. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) took the lead in planning the operation of initial defense of Saudi Arabia (Desert Shield) and the subsequent offensive operation to liberate Kuwait (Desert Storm). As the subunified command of CENTCOM for Special Operations, Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) commanded and controlled the special operations forces in the theater. U.S. Army Special Forces made up the majority of these forces and performed many, varied missions.<sup>44</sup>

Admiral Jeremiah, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sums up the Special Forces operations when he says, "Thanks to some superb leadership, our special operations forces have set a very high standard for interservice cooperation. They have also set the example for operational adaptability."<sup>45</sup> Special Forces executed a variety of missions in the Persian Gulf such as training indigenous troops and conducting long-range reconnaissance and targeting missions.<sup>46</sup> The Department of Defense

interim report to Congress, Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict, lists several more missions: coalition warfare support, Kuwaiti military reconstruction, combined special reconnaissance, unilateral special reconnaissance, direct action and combat search and rescue.<sup>47</sup> Lieutenant General Wayne A. Downing, commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, includes as a final mission the training of some coalition partners in unconventional warfare.<sup>48</sup> He adds that General Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command (CINCCENT), and his staff closely integrated special operations forces into the CENTCOM overall campaign planning and that special operations forces conducted almost every one of their classic mission areas.<sup>49</sup>

These missions underscore the integration of special operations, in general, and Special Forces, in particular, into the full spectrum of the U.S. military capabilities. Senator Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, made these same observations during hearings after Desert Shield and Desert Storm (DS/DS).<sup>50</sup> He said : "The extensive use of special operations forces in . . . the Persian Gulf has confirmed the importance of their capability in a military contingency response."<sup>51</sup> He found this integration particularly gratifying because the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 [technically, the Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the fiscal 1987 Defense Authorization Act] created a separate Unified Command to accomplish precisely that task.<sup>52</sup>

The coalition forces integration mission became the most extensive mission for Special Forces during the entire conflict. Special Forces teams were attached to 107 different battalions of the Arab coalition allies.<sup>53</sup> These teams faced the challenge of integrating the Arab partners into the campaign



plan by using language skills, their communications equipment, and their tactical expertise particularly in air-to-ground operations. There was a great need for immediate interface among allies because so much of the Arab coalition equipment was identical to the Iraqis.<sup>54</sup>

These teams started working in late August 1990 so that by January 1991 "they had become a vital link in the theater battle integration process. Without them, it would have been very difficult for coalition forces to receive U.S. fire support or to coordinate tactical operations with U.S. and other allied forces."<sup>55</sup> The wide disparity in equipment, command and control procedures and capabilities made the mission critical to CINCCENT. He needed to know the "ground truth" about location of units, status of readiness and capabilities of units in terms U.S. planners could use and understand.<sup>56</sup> Special Forces were chosen because they had the subtlety to pass on this information to their U.S. chain of command and still keep the confidence of their Arab partners. By using interpersonal skills and maturity the teams knew when to advise and assist and when to stay out of Arab decisions. They had to walk a thin line that only their cultural sensitivity could help them walk. They did it well. As the interim report to Congress says, they were chosen "because of their unique capabilities--language and cultural orientation skills, wide range of tactical and technical expertise, and high levels of training . . . Coalition warfare support included individual, joint and combined training and operations, and liaison with Coalition forces."<sup>57</sup>

Special Forces teams also helped in the reconstitution of the Kuwaiti Army. More than just liaison teams, the Special Forces teams advised the Kuwaiti military at all levels. The Kuwaitis had elements of only two functional brigades after the Iraqi attack. By February 1991 the Kuwaitis had

equipped and Special Forces had trained elements of six Brigades. These Kuwaiti Brigades spearheaded the Arab Coalition attacks, and eventually cleared and secured Kuwait City.<sup>58</sup>

Special Forces teams supported the conventional operations by conducting Special Reconnaissance (SR) deep into Iraq. The exposed Iraqi western flank was so obvious that CENTCOM planners thought it could be a deliberate trap. They also needed detailed information about the trafficability of the soil so that hundreds of heavy tanks would not end up stranded in Iraq. The planned route of the armored advance was reconnoitered by Special Forces all the way to the Euphrates River.<sup>59</sup>

Combined teams of Arabs and Special Forces conducted many SR missions along the Saudi border to pinpoint Iraqi positions and to recapture Saudi observation posts. These early warning posts were very important, particularly early in Desert Shield when Iraqi intentions were still quite unclear.<sup>60</sup>

After Action Reviews (AAR) found additional language proficiency in Arabic would have increased the teams' effectiveness; however, they still accomplished their missions using translators and learning the language in the best learning environment: total immersion into the culture. The AAR indicated the sensitivity of executing cross border operations before hostilities. This could either tip off the enemy to impending tactical events or complicate political and diplomatic efforts intended to end the conflict peacefully. Employment of Special Forces required detailed analysis of these implications.<sup>61</sup>

In sum, Special Forces demonstrated their ability to operate in a mid-intensity war as a combat multiplier. They contributed directly to the combat

commander's ability to succeed and they played a more indirect role in providing the "glue"<sup>62</sup> that kept the politically disparate coalition together. Who could have imagined Syria fighting side-by-side with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and the United States? Special Forces operated as a critical part of coalition warfare. They lived with, worked with, cajoled, advised, and fought the war with indigenous peoples of the Middle-East. They conducted all of their operations as joint operations with the Air Force-whether to plan an infiltration route for SR, to call for air support for a coalition unit or to plan the ground operation for a combat search and rescue. They operated with allies who were cooperating for as many political reasons as military and with the Kuwaitis whose entire political existence depended on their reconstitution. Finally, as these professional American fighting men engaged in daily interchange with their coalition partners they demonstrated their own version of a military in a democracy.

#### CASE STUDY TWO: PROVIDE COMFORT

In the internal Iraqi political aftermath of Desert Storm the Kurdish minority in the northeastern portion of the country rose in rebellion against the rule of Saddam Hussein. Their military insurrection was no match for the regular divisions, especially the Republican Guard units, of the Iraqi army that survived the cauldron of Kuwait during the 100-hour ground offensive 24-28 February 1991.<sup>63</sup> The Kurdish uprising started on 7 March and ended by 3 April 1991. As the Iraqi army returned to control the northern cities, the Kurdish population, fearing mass retaliation or even genocide, fled to the mountain passes to the north and the Turkish border. The Turks did not

want 500,000 refugees in the difficult-to-control region of southeastern Turkey, already home to twelve million ethnic Kurds. As a result, the Turkish government ordered their army and border police to stop all refugees in the mountain passes and control them.<sup>64</sup> The result was human disaster on a scale so great that the world community felt compelled to act quickly.

The United Nations passed Security Council Resolution 688 condemning the Iraqi action and calling on the world to aid the Kurdish refugees.<sup>65</sup> On 5 April with the consent of the Turkish government, President Bush ordered U.S. forces to move to Turkey which was quickly becoming overwhelmed by the scale of the logistical problem of keeping hundreds of thousands of unprepared civilians in snowy mountain passes without massive starvation, disease, and death.

Joint Task Force (JTF) Provide Comfort was created on 6 April by U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) with the mission to provide immediate air drops of food and supplies to the refugees. Those air drops began on 7 April, the same day the first Special Forces elements arrived at Incirlik AFB, Turkey to provide combat search and rescue (CSAR) in the event the Iraqis decided to interfere in the air operations. On 9 April the Special Forces mission changed to include moving into the camps to assess the conditions and to organize the refugees so that food distribution, sanitation and medical aid would be efficient.<sup>66</sup> After a fast Kurdish culture orientation and learning some basic Kurdish phrases, the first Special Forces elements from 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed in Bad Toelz, Germany, entered the camps on 14 April.<sup>67</sup> They had an immediate and positive impact.

Within days all the refugee camps along the Turkish border had

company sized Special Forces elements from the rest of 10th SFG(A) at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts. Approximately 452,000 displaced civilians (DC) filled these camps for eight weeks until they gradually returned to their homes or other camps set up by Combined Task Force (CTF) Provide Comfort farther south. The challenge was enormous; the sixty men in each camp had to turn absolute chaos into survivable conditions and then encourage the DC to return home before the mountain streams dried up in the rainless summer sun.<sup>68</sup>

Each company approached its task slightly differently according to the conditions faced. Yet, their approaches supported the battalion mission: organize the refugees to survive as you would organize a resistance movement to fight a partisan war. Only the advice would not be on combat tactics but on survival strategies to end the suffering in the camps.<sup>69</sup> They made initial assessments that provided the first detailed military information on the disaster. These assessments went all the way to General Galvin, SACEUR, to help make operational decisions on how to handle the crisis.<sup>70</sup>

Security of the Special Forces companies became the first priority on the ground. The companies accomplished this by close coordination with the Turkish army units posted to each refugee camp. The companies found themselves in a coalition with a very fine line of cooperation. The Turkish approach to handling Kurdish problems departed dramatically from the Americans', with Special Forces soldiers becoming the buffer when violence threatened. For example, Chief Warrant Officer Paul Tompkins, of 1st BN, 10th SFG(A), on 29 April stood between a screaming mob of refugees and some heavily armed, but young, Turkish soldiers. By getting the right Kurdish leaders to calm the volatile crowd he was able to dissuade the very.

scared Turkish troops from shooting several refugees.<sup>71</sup> The Special Forces could not appear to be dependent on the Turks for fear of losing the trust of the refugees who deeply distrusted and hated the Turks. This situation approaches the Balkans in its political complexity and brutal ethnic hatreds.

The Special Forces companies simultaneously accomplished these tasks after their coordination with the Turks: they called for the village elders or other leaders to come forward to help ease the camp conditions. They introduced themselves to all the PVO and NGO and offered assistance to them to help with security, logistics or operations. They distributed food and supplies as fairly as possible in the absence of any camp structure. With great difficulty they safely operated landing zones where all the initial supplies were arriving in Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Army, German Luftwaffe, and Dutch Air Force helicopters in a totally uncontrolled air environment where each country and service wanted to be the first to help no matter what the priority on the ground might be.<sup>72</sup> These immediate tasks were very successful and brought calm and discipline to the camps. The Kurdish refugees began changing their behavior. They waited in lines for food instead of mobbing a PVO food truck and used makeshift latrines instead of defecating next to their neighbor's tent. And they started listening to their own leaders whom the Special Forces companies now organized into camp councils.

The NGO and PVO that distrusted most militaries turned instead to the Special Forces who coordinated nightly meetings and strategy sessions to solve problems and plan new actions. All of these groups began inviting the Special Forces to share meals as they found them to be multi-lingual, mature and politically astute noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and officers.

It did not hurt relations when the Special Forces shared fuel and clean water, passed radio messages and gave vehicle rides or arranged for helicopter transportation for them.<sup>73</sup> This congenial atmosphere of cooperation existed because Special Forces soldiers knew how to use all their assets, including goodwill, to accomplish the mission.

The Special Forces headquarters found that they worked daily with the U.S. State Department team that was sent to coordinate policy with Lieutenant General John M. Shalikashvili, who became the CTF commander in mid-April. The Special Forces units at all levels dealt daily with interagency issues. For example, once the refugees decided that their homes were secure from Iraqi police (because other combat elements from the CTF had pushed the Iraqi army far to the south), Special Forces organized bus and truck convoys that required crossing the Turkish border post back into Iraq. The Turks asserted their sovereignty by initially requiring papers on all three to four thousand refugees a day.<sup>74</sup> The State Department team worked closely with the Special Forces to smooth this very delicate political and procedural problem. Military efficiency took second place to political considerations. To do otherwise could have brought the entire operation to a halt if the Turks had felt that their sovereignty was violated or that the United States was trying to act unilaterally in their country. Even though frustrated by the delays and resultant suffering by innocent civilians, Special Forces officers and NCOs used the interagency team to solve the political problems and accomplish the mission.

As the operation grew, more nations joined the effort until eleven were in the CTF.<sup>75</sup> At the practical level this meant, for example, that the 1st Battalion headquarters had liaison NCOs living with a French paratroop

platoon at a critical road junction on the refugee route back to the city of Zakho, providing communication and coordination of effort. At the B Company camp at Yekmal, five British Royal Marine Commandos kept the U.S. element informed of British efforts on the Iraqi side of the mountains to prepare intermediate feeding and care stations for refugees leaving B Company's camp on foot.<sup>76</sup>

At the camp at Isikveren where A Company entered on 28 April, a convoy of five 2 1/2 ton Luxembourg army trucks arrived unannounced and uncoordinated, full of every conceivable supply for extended camping, along with a platoon of troops ready to help in any way possible. The Special Forces NCOs knew several of the Luxembourgers from previous combined exercises in Luxembourg. The platoon moved right into the Special Forces tents and began executing tasks that were recommended by Major D. Randy Bissel, the Special Forces company commander. Not a single hour was wasted in getting the new troops integrated into the operation even though there was no governmental agreement or command relationship.<sup>77</sup> The Special Forces leaders and soldiers used their interpersonal skills, their professional reputation and common sense to insure the ad hoc coalition worked to complete the mission.

Operation Provide Comfort, in sum, shows Special Forces deeply involved in all seven criteria areas. They exuded their democratic heritage indirectly by defending the rights of innocents and by following the political directions of the State Department when State had the lead in political decisions. They worked closely with the indigenous people to help them help themselves. They operated in a thoroughly joint and combined environment. They worked with and earned the respect of the PVO and



NGO so that these organizations turned to them to coordinate problem solving. And, finally, they placed political considerations above military ones in every situation in order to insure the success of the mission.

### CASE STUDY THREE: EL SALVADOR

Special Forces involvement in El Salvador shows a very different type of operating environment; and yet, the skills that proved to be successful in the previous case studies seem to be successful here as well. Special Forces advisors came to El Salvador in 1983 in an effort to professionalize the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF). The Marxist guerrilla movement, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), was poised for an outright military victory because of their effective resupply sources from the Soviet Union via Cuba and Nicaragua and the incompetence of the ESAF to effectively meet the threat.<sup>78</sup> The social situation in El Salvador also created an ideal environment for revolution. The military supported a repressive government which was limited to the participation of a small circle of powerful families.<sup>79</sup> This analysis will not focus on the details of the conflict, but rather on the Special Forces efforts to professionalize the ESAF during a protracted ten year conflict that continues to make headlines today as it slowly moves toward a conclusion.

This study includes the Salvadoran conflict because it reflects part of the future security environment that includes intractable social and economic imbalances in states that have weak governmental institutions. These states often have military establishments that work for their own enrichment rather than working toward solving long-standing problems. They also work to

protect the status quo.<sup>80</sup> El Salvador is one of these states. The level of violence and human rights abuses are, unfortunately, a very common method of conducting political competition in El Salvador just as they are becoming more common in the ethno-nationalistic conflicts in the rest of the world.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, this is a good case to see if Special Forces capabilities have applicability in the future in these protracted types of conflicts.

The ESAF has a long-standing reputation as a brutal, corrupt institution that supports right-wing death squads by providing them with intelligence sources to locate and murder or torture opponents of the government, be they moderate reformers or radical guerrillas.<sup>82</sup> Many directly participated in or ordered murders and torture as well.<sup>83</sup> Colonel John D. Waghelstein arrived in El Salvador as the U.S. Embassy's Military Advisory Group (MILGRP) commander in 1982. He was charged with the job of reforming the ESAF so that it could deal effectively with the insurgency while the other agencies of the country team helped the Salvadorans build democratic institutions, carry out agrarian reform, and create a viable justice system which was needed to win the support of the peasants who were not supporting either the guerrillas or the government.

This massive interagency effort focused on the principle of winning the insurgent war, which required winning the support of the masses. To gain this support, El Salvadoran society required nothing short of a radical, total change. The U.S. policy called for three primary reforms: true power-sharing by the oligarchy through the establishment of democracy and the creation of democratic institutions such as an independent judiciary; land redistribution and agrarian reform as well as other economic reforms; reform of the ESAF so that it could protect the country's infrastructure while

maintaining the support of the peasants and destroy the guerrilla's ability to conduct offensive operations.<sup>84</sup> As Colonel Waghelstein so aptly expressed it: "If we were going to win this war, we had to win it economically and politically. We concluded that the most important piece of turf was the six inches between the ears of every peasant."<sup>85</sup> Colonel Waghelstein, at this time an Infantry officer with Special Forces experience dating to the early 1960s, called on Special Forces officers and NCOs to fill advisor jobs called Operations And Training Team (OPATT), with the charter to professionalize the ESAF.

Starting in 1982 the OPATTs began working with the ESAF General Staff and their numbers grew steadily so that all the ESAF Brigade Headquarters had them. Currently, these OPATTs consist of a Special Forces officer and NCO and are sometimes supplemented by an intelligence officer. They live unaccompanied for one year on the Brigade Headquarters compound, totally immersed in the culture and job of advising the Brigade. They are fluent in Spanish and influence the ESAF by their continuous presence. This is a coalition effort and OPATTs are the front line.<sup>86</sup>

They are the front line for demonstrating how a professional officer acts in a democracy as well. The caring for troops, selflessness, mission-first attitude, an intolerance for human rights abuses, and the respect for individuals of all backgrounds appear as qualities exuded by the OPATT in interviews conducted by the author.<sup>87</sup> The military training competence that they brought with them as field grade officers and senior NCOs gave them respect and credibility with the ESAF officers so that U.S. views on human rights and democracy were heard and pondered by the ESAF Brigade. Colonel Mark R. Hamilton, former MILGRP commander, 1990-1992, and a

field artillery officer, states that Special Forces soldiers, far better than officers and NCOs from other branches of the Army, understood that their every action and word had political significance in this mission to have the ESAF act responsibly in a democracy.<sup>88</sup>

This is also an interagency environment where military considerations are secondary to political ones. In 1983, for example, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) officer in the Embassy worked directly with the OPATT commander to coordinate military operations in order to facilitate nonmilitary economic projects that would have tremendous political results if executed well by the Salvadorans.<sup>89</sup>

The test of the effectiveness of the Special Forces advisors came during the peace negotiations in October 1991 when the FMLN wrote a formal note to the U.S. Government urging a future role for U.S. advisors with the ESAF, particularly at the Brigade level. Colonel Hamilton was privy to this communication which went on to explain candidly that the FMLN saw a dramatic drop in ESAF human rights abuses toward civilians and an increase in the taking of guerrilla POWs instead of summary execution immediately after the arrival of the OPATTs in any Brigade area. This drop in abuses undercut the guerrillas' recruiting and general support as the peasants came to see the army as an honest protector.<sup>90</sup> This is high praise indeed since the guerrillas were asking the U.S. military to play a role in a country in which the FMLN would soon be a full political partner.

Human rights abuses have not altogether stopped, however. Political murders decreased from 610 a month in 1980, to 444 a month in 1981, to 23 per month in 1987.<sup>91</sup> This is a dramatic improvement but proof that the practice continues is enough to show that normal political

intercourse in El Salvador will need additional nurturing so that compromise is the norm instead of violence and death. This level of violence could not exist without at least the knowledge of the ESAF since they control all the informant systems for the police. The professionalization has not been totally successful.

Despite this lack of total success, the Special Forces soldiers appear to be the best ones for the situation. One current OPATT member, Major Thomas L. Tate, concurs when he says:

Often Special Forces soldiers work with no official position in the chain of command to which they are associated. Their success often depends upon the recommendations that may or may not be accepted by the host nation chain of command. Conventional [US] forces have not been trained to interact with host nation forces in this fashion.<sup>92</sup>

Sergeant First Class William B. Thompson says it better than anyone else when asked what qualities Special Forces possessed to accomplish their mission of professionalizing the ESAF:

Is this a trick question? Qualities? Let's start with the desire to be Special Forces, the desire to excel, self motivation, a sense of pride in themselves and of a job well done. Patriotism, with a firm belief in America and what it stands for, the acceptance of the hardships and of the challenges, as well as [to be] adaptable to any given situation as acquired through personal and military training. Qualities such as intestinal fortitude, vision, and intelligence.<sup>93</sup>

These two examples show that the Special Forces officers and NCOs understand the uniqueness of their situation and have the confidence in themselves to get the job done.

In relationship to the seven criteria, El Salvador provides a useful case study. The Special Forces soldiers lived in an environment where they

worked as advisors in a form of coalition partnership. They totally immersed themselves in the culture but they did not forget their responsibility to teach the principles of being a military professional in a democracy. They understood that their efforts always supported political actions. Their advice conformed to this relationship and their personal words and actions carried the same message. Their relationship was the same on the interagency, country team with the U.S. military supporting the U.S. political priorities as determined by the State Department. The Special Forces soldiers did not work with NGOs or PVOs in El Salvador often enough to be significant. There is good evidence to show Special Forces usefulness in all the criteria except this last one.

#### CASE STUDY FOUR: OPERATION SILVER ANVIL

The final case study of the analysis will examine a little-known operation that occurred in May 1992 at the same time the Los Angeles riots attracted so much media attention. Silver Anvil evacuated 439 Americans and third-country nationals from Sierra Leone when the internal security situation deteriorated after a military coup toppled the civilian government. This case is worth studying because it fits the U.S. strategic foundations of forward presence and crisis response in that USEUCOM, the forward-stationed Unified Command, got the requirement to respond to the U.S. Ambassador's request for evacuation. It also fits the National Military Strategy statement: "While we emphasize multinational operations under the auspices of international bodies such as the United Nations, we must retain the capability to act unilaterally when and where U.S. interests dictate."<sup>94</sup>

Silver Anvil demonstrated this capability perfectly.

Silver Anvil was a unilateral United States action, totally joint, totally Special Operations and a totally integrated interagency operation. It was carried out from alert in Stuttgart, Germany, to completion of the evacuation in 96 hours, with no injuries and no incidents that would cause political difficulties for the United States.<sup>95</sup> Norman Sisisky, U.S. Representative from Virginia's 4th District, spoke on the House floor praising the operation saying: "I rise today to pay tribute to the professionalism and bravery of the United States Special Forces who recently evacuated American citizens from the West African country of Sierra Leone."<sup>96</sup>

When USEUCOM received the requirement from the Joint Staff in Washington it turned to Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) as an immediately deployable headquarters with Army Special Forces up to a battalion strength (1st BN, 10th SFG(A) stationed in Stuttgart, GE) flying on Air Force Special Operations aircraft of the 39th Special Operations Wing (SOW), now designated as the 352nd Special Operations Group, only one hour flying time away in the United Kingdom.<sup>97</sup> The Commanding General of SOCEUR, Brigadier General Richard Potter, determined that he needed only one company of Special Forces for ground security in what was described as a benign but potentially hostile environment. The 39th SOW would be used to evacuate as many Americans and third-country nationals (TCN) as directed by the U.S. Ambassador in Sierra Leone.

SOCEUR received the deployment order at 1700 hours 29 April and the first aircraft lifted off at 0600, 30 April, notification plus 13 hours, with a total complement of 154 U.S. personnel in two MC-130 and two HC-130 aircraft. The State Department coordinated the JTF arrival in Dakar,

Senegal and its use as an Intermediate Staging Base (ISB).<sup>98</sup> The Defense Attache and the entire U.S. Embassy mobilized to support the operation by coordinating with the Senegal Air Force to use a barracks on the air field for billeting and planning. After an intense day of planning an advanced party arrived in Sierra Leone's airport across the bay from the capital, Freetown, just before dark and a curfew.<sup>99</sup>

The ground force commander, Lieutenant Colonel Hayward S. Florer, led this reconnaissance and was able to communicate with the Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission by unsecure embassy Motorola radio, detailing the full plan to all within communication radius which included all of the official Americans who would be sending their families out the next day and most of the unofficial Americans who would also be leaving. The Embassy was very well organized and rehearsed to execute the evacuation the following day despite the fact that their living conditions had deteriorated dramatically and the level of violence had skyrocketed with uncontrolled young soldiers looting homes at gunpoint.<sup>100</sup> The interagency coordination and planning at this early stage created the conditions for success during the next two days.

The U.S. Embassy coordinated with the new military government to allow the rescue force to land at the airport which was officially closed to all traffic. The details, however, had not been passed to the airport officials and LTC Florer spent an exciting forty minutes talking to the Minister of Transportation over radio telephone convincing him that the United States was not dictating Sierra Leone's airport hours of operation in the current crisis.<sup>101</sup> After the arrival of the ground force the next day, the Special Forces company commander, Major William Fleaser, instructed his men to cooperate with the local security by manning some combined security posts.



but to be ready for unilateral and violent action to save U.S. lives if necessary. Everyone remained aware of the delicate political situation in the country.

The evacuation went smoothly all day. Two C-141 aircraft arrived to transport a 175-person USAF medical assistance team which had been operating on a routine visit until the coup limited their operations.<sup>102</sup> Again joint coordination and planning the night before with the reconnaissance party made their redeployment fast and incident-free.

The ground force stayed overnight at the Air Force medical team's abandoned encampment 500 yards from the airport in order to maintain control of the situation and complete the evacuation the next day. The rest of the evacuees left the next day without incident except that the counsellor officer who had come directly from Washington to Dakar could not get his satellite radio to work. He turned to the ability of the Special Forces radiomen to fabricate a new cable, allowing him to communicate.<sup>103</sup> Here was interagency cooperation at the cutting edge.

Operation Silver Anvil did not include any United Nations or PVO coordination. It did not require coalition building, although Special Forces soldiers cooperated with the well-armed airport troops very carefully. Otherwise, the operation involved all of the other criteria, particularly the ability of Special Forces to operate and integrate in an interagency environment in a crisis and still be the supporting player to the State Department and the political factors that defined the crisis.

## EVALUATION OF THE CRITERIA

The four case studies differ greatly in scope and intensity, ranging from the 100-hour, conventional war during Desert Storm to the protracted, ten-year, indirect involvement in El Salvador, with humanitarian assistance in Provide Comfort and a NEO during Silver Anvil providing the variety that reflects the current security environment and the United States' response to it. Of course, situations change but the analysis of the case studies in light of seven criteria that describe the key Special Forces operational elements needed in the future should provide some insight into the utility of Special Forces to the regionally oriented Unified Commanders in the future.

Criterion #1: Special Forces must be a force for promoting democracy and stability. Special Forces were most decisive in El Salvador where mission success was directly related to this criterion. However, in all the other cases such as the relationship between Arab coalition allies in DS/DS or while organizing the Kurdish leadership in Provide Comfort or in coordinating airport security with Sierra Leone officers, Special Forces soldiers conducted themselves as military professionals of a democracy, exuding the standards of conduct and respect for democracy that enhanced stability and the growth of democratic ideas.

Criterion #2: Special Forces must be prepared to live and work with indigenous peoples, understand their culture, speak their language and remain thoroughly professional soldiers. Again, Special Forces' mission in El Salvador most aptly demonstrated their effectiveness in this regard. As the evidence showed, they operated indirectly and used their powers of persuasion within the Salvadoran culture to influence the officers of the ESAF to modify their behavior, to professionalize.

The coalition warfare requirement in DS/DS also immersed the Special Forces teams in the local culture and language. But not all could speak Arabic and their mission differed from El Salvador in that they did not focus on professionalizing the coalition, but worked to provide a vital conduit between the coalition and operational headquarters. Nevertheless, great trust and mutual respect grew between fellow soldiers.

In Provide Comfort the Special Forces lived with the refugees and the Turkish soldiers and the NGO and the PVO in the camps throughout the entire ordeal. Although no one spoke Kurdish, the soldiers quickly learned key phrases and customs and courtesies which gave them the respect of the people and hence, their effectiveness.

This criterion played a very small part in Silver Anvil as contact was limited to a few indigenous airport security guards. But, the newly appointed Minister of Security, a 23-year old lieutenant, made an inspection in the middle of the operation and was treated like royalty by the Special Forces officers and NCOs, showing their ability to deal effectively with the delicate politics of an unstable situation<sup>104</sup>. The example of calming the fears of the Minister of Transportation illustrated the care taken with the locals. This is the unique quality of Special Forces: they can effectively influence indigenous peoples as an important part of their mission.

**Criterion #3: Special Forces must operationally integrate with and contribute to the efficiency of a coalition in which the United States is a partner.** Desert Shield/Storm exemplifies Special Forces' success in this criterion. As already shown they were essential to CINCCENT's campaign plan and in meeting his political as well as military objectives. During Provide Comfort Special Forces became a coalition partner in a much less

rigid, ad hoc organization where individual initiative and leadership made the difference. This is where Special Forces excel. In El Salvador the relationship was more as advisor and trainer than coalition partner; but ultimately, this was a partnership of 13 years which prevented a Marxist government from coming to power by fundamentally reforming Salvadoran society. Special Forces again provided the interface with the most visible element of the government: the ESAF. It was a decisive force for change. During Silver Anvil this criterion played no real part because the U.S. did not consider the new Sierra Leone government an ally or an enemy, but rather as a catalyst for future anarchy. Special Forces was respectful of the locals' sovereignty but did not work with them as a coalition partner.

Criterion #4: Special Forces must cooperate with and enhance the operations of the United Nations and other NGO and PVO. Provide Comfort exemplified the usefulness of Special Forces in this criterion. Daily meetings and mutual trust were the norm even for the most distrustful PVO. Humanitarian assistance missions brought out these organizations; Special Forces provided effective interface with them. During the other operations, very little evidence appeared to show significant NGO and PVO cooperation.

Criterion #5: Special Forces must operate routinely and at maximum efficiency in a joint force. The obvious case study that reflected this criterion was Silver Anvil. The air and ground operations had to flow smoothly and had to be ready to move from a benign environment to a combat situation smoothly and quickly. The USAF, 7th Special Operations Squadron, cooperated in every detail with Special Forces. The execution was flawless; the contingency plans were thorough. Less central to their mission, but still important, was the ground-to-air communications that Special Forces

provided to the coalition during DS/DS. Also during DS/DS, the CSAR efforts were totally joint as well with Special Forces commanding the joint ground element if an extended search was necessary. Provide Comfort was also a joint environment for Special Forces with USAF air controllers in every camp and every service flying helicopters in and out of all the camps constantly. El Salvador had little joint work for Special Forces.

Criterion #6: Special Forces must cooperate with and work smoothly in an interagency team where political factors are often more important than military ones. El Salvador 's insurgency required Special Forces to be totally integrated in the interagency team because of its closeness to the ESAF and the ESAF's power in the government. Special Forces worked to make the ESAF understand that strong democratic institutions and a reformed economy remained the essence of winning the war. Therefore, Special Forces played a critical but strictly supporting role in achieving U.S. objectives in the country. The evidence shows that Special Forces understood and played their part better than other Army officers or NCOs could do. Silver Anvil required thorough integration of Special Forces in a fast-moving crisis response situation where they were not on the country team, but reacted to the plans of the Embassy and integrated the evacuation operation into those plans. Again, the Ambassador's objectives remained the cornerstone of the operation. During Provide Comfort BG Potter, commander of JTF-Alpha, which commanded all the Special Forces in the refugee camps, coordinated directly with the State Department team located with him. As was evidenced, this coordination allowed the U.S. government to effectively deal simultaneously with Iraqi leaders, the Kurdish leadership, the Turkish government, and the NGO and PVO; it was no easy task while

staying focused on saving the hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees. Special Forces conducted little interagency work during DS/DS because of the size of the operation and the missions that they were given.

Criterion #7: Special Forces must operate effectively and appropriately in situations where political factors are as, or more, important as military factors. As indicated above Special Forces operated in and understood the complexity of the politics of El Salvador. In Provide Comfort they realized the political consequences of their commitment to the Kurds, that of creating a de facto Kurdistan. During Silver Anvil they felt the underlying tension of African violence that could explode if the political situation changed dramatically; after all, that is why the Ambassador ordered an evacuation. Finally, in DS/DS they understood the real reason for their presence with the Arab coalition was political: to show the Arabs that the U.S. cared about their integration and to have American eyes reporting the realities of Arab locations and operations. The United States needed Arab political solidarity more than their effective firepower, and Special Forces proved to be the ideal element to cement that solidarity.

## CONCLUSIONS

Special Forces have great usefulness in the future to the Unified Commanders. They comprise a force that is regionally oriented and can decisively influence very politically sensitive situations to support U.S. objectives whether in a protracted conflict or in a crisis. The evidence shows clearly that they made the critical difference in El Salvador where the U.S. had invested its money and reputation. They effectively demonstrated how a

professional military operates in a democracy and, thereby, encouraged stable democratic institutions. They were also decisive in Provide Comfort, a completely different political and mission environment, by bringing order to the chaos of a humanitarian crisis, and, thereby, achieving a primary objective in tomorrow's security environment -- regional stability. Special Forces operated well with the United Nations and other NGO and PVO that will be involved in or provide the leadership for operations in the future. In Silver Anvil the Special Operations Army/Air Force team proved to be the fastest, most effective force for the regional Unified Commander; that team was decisive because of its ability to operate in a joint, interagency situation which will certainly be the norm in tomorrow's conflicts. During DS/DS they did not play a decisive role in the war's success but they certainly enhanced operations and were combat multipliers on the conventional battlefield.

Special Forces operations in these recent and ongoing operations make these conclusions the more valid by showing how the Unified Commanders have actually used Special Forces in Latin America, the Middle-East, and Africa. Campaign planners for these and all the other Unified commanders now have a model for Special Forces usefulness in the future international security environment and in the U.S. military strategy that deals with that environment.

This study began with the hypothesis that Special Forces would be a useful military element in the future security environment. Through an analysis of that environment and the development of seven evaluation criteria, the study examined four case studies. The evidence shows Special Forces to be a versatile as well as useful element available to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Unified Commanders-in-Chief.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Research interview questions for monograph.**

- 1. How effective have U.S. Army Special Forces officers and NCOs been in the professionalization of the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF)?**
- 2. What tasks did they accomplish that made this effort successful?**
- 3. What specific qualities and abilities do they have that makes them more effective than the officers and NCOs of other branches of the Army as well as other branches of service?**
- 4. How well do they work in an interagency environment? In what ways do they do this?**
- 5. Are they working with international agencies (UN, ICRC, UNICEF)? How well do they work with them? What have they done?**
- 6. How effective have SF officers and NCOs been in projecting U.S. values of democracy and the role of the military in a democracy? What actions have you seen them take to demonstrate this?**
- 7. How effective have SF officers and NCOs been in projecting respect for human rights and standards of conduct (reducing incidents of brutality, murder and corruption)? What actions have they taken to demonstrate this effectiveness? Has the FMLN indicated that the SF advisors were effective at these tasks?**



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<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.* , 2, 22.

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<sup>47</sup>Department of Defense, Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, 5-1.

<sup>48</sup>Downing, "Special Operations: A Force . . . ," 25.

<sup>49</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>Congress, Senate, Committee on the Armed Services, Hearings on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, 102nd Congress, 1st Session, June 1991, 370.

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<sup>54</sup>David A. Fulghum, "U.S. Special Forces Advisors Integrate Armies from Arab Nations," Aviation Week and Space Technology 134, #8 (25 February 1991), 23.

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